

# **Visitor Services Project**

## **Natchez Trace Parkway**

### **Report Summary**

- This report describes the results of a study of visitors to Natchez Trace Parkway during May 12-18, 1991. Five hundred sixteen questionnaires were distributed and 405 returned, a 78% response rate.
- The data reflect the use patterns of visitors to selected sites during the designated study period. The results do not necessarily apply to visitors using other sites, or using Natchez Trace Parkway during other times of the year.
- The report profiles Natchez Trace visitors. The separate appendix has visitors' comments about the park and their visit. A summary of these comments is included in both the report and the appendix.
- Forty-eight percent of visitors were in family groups. Thirty-four percent of visitors were 41 to 60 years old. Thirty-seven percent of visitors had visited Natchez Trace Parkway ten or more times.
- Visitors from foreign countries comprised 3% of the visitation to Natchez Trace Parkway. Eighty-four percent of American visitors came from Mississippi and Alabama.
- Seventy-five percent of visitors stayed four hours or less on the parkway. Sightseeing (40%), driving for business or to work (39%), "other" activities identified as driving to visit relatives or friends and traveling (31%), reading roadside exhibits (20%) and visiting museums/visitor centers (17%) were the most common activities of visitors this visit.
- The most visited sites were the Cypress Swamp Nature Trail (12%), Tenn-Tom Waterway Interpretive Site (11%), and the Rocky Springs Townsite Trail (9%).
- On the day of their visit, visitors started their trips most often from Jackson and Tupelo and Natchez, Mississippi. Most visitors used Highways 55, 61, and 6 to enter Natchez Trace Parkway and the same highways when exiting.
- Fifty-eight percent of visitors obtained information about the park from previous visits, 29% from friends and/or relatives and 28% from maps.
- The most important visitor services according to visitors were the roadway surface, restrooms and roadway signs. Of the services they used, visitors rated roadside exhibits, visitor centers/museums, park brochure/map and contact with uniformed park staff as highest in quality.
- Other historic sites or tourist attractions visitors visited during this trip were Natchez, Mississippi (5%) and Jeff Busby (4%); 38% of visitors did not visit other sites.
- Visitors made many more general comments about their visits to the park.

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For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact Dr. Gary E. Machlis, Sociology Project Leader, University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit, College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, Moscow, Idaho 83843 or call (208)885-7129.